

**Date:** August 19, 2014

**To:** Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

**Through:** W. Bowman "Bo" Ferguson, Deputy City Manager

**From:** Rhonda B. Parker, Director, Parks and Recreation

**Subject:** Acceptance of a grant from the North Carolina Horse Council

**Executive Summary**

The North Carolina Horse Council has awarded a \$5,000 grant to Durham Parks and Recreation to support the development of a parking lot at the Scott King Road access to the American Tobacco Trail. This project will provide a parking lot that includes some pull through spaces for horse trailers. The Scott King Road access to the trail will be the first access to the American Tobacco Trail for equestrians in Durham; south of Scott King Road the trail is accessible to horses. Additional funding for this project was approved on June 16, 2014 in the 2014 Capital Improvement Project Budget.

**Recommendation**

The Administration recommends that City Council adopt a resolution and authorize the City Manager to accept the NC Horse Council grant of \$5,000 by executing any associated grant documents; and adopt an ordinance amending the General Capital Improvement Project Ordinance, Fiscal Year 2014-2015, as amended, the same being Ordinance # 14623 for the purpose of adding funding in the amount of \$5,000 for the American Tobacco Trail Parking Lot project.

**Background**

According to the 2009 North Carolina Equine Survey, more than 5,400 horses reside within Durham County, with approximately 12,000 more in nearby counties, not including Wake County. The study states that the primary activity for 40% of those equines is pleasure riding and trail riding.

However, few public facilities are available in the Triangle and surrounding areas for those equestrian trail riders. Durham is fortunate to have the recently completed American Tobacco Trail. The southern portion of this trail offers 12 miles of trail open to horseback riders as well as other non-motorized users.

The American Tobacco Trail is a multi-use recreational trail traversing Durham, Chatham and Wake Counties. Equestrian access begins on Scott King Road in southern Durham County and travels south to New Hill-Olive Chapel Road in Wake County. If riders return to their original access point, they could ride for 24 miles. This portion of the trail has a separate granite gravel section for equestrian use and is already well used by riders. Horse waste is

quickly biodegradable (herbivore) and does not require additional maintenance. The NC Horse Council grant and capital project will provide much needed parking for the Scott King Rd trail access; this is a timely project as development planned for the area will halt parking along the side of the road. Without the pull through spaces for trailers, equestrians will have to occupy multiple regular spaces.

With the opening of this final phase of the American Tobacco Trail (ATT), the need for a parking lot that includes horse trailer parking in Durham becomes imperative. The ATT has only two (2) parking areas that accommodate horse trailers. Both are located in Wake County and are only about five (5) miles apart. These do not conveniently serve the trail users in Chatham and Durham counties.

The City of Durham has a long-term lease agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) for land for a parking lot on Scott King Road. The triangular property is directly adjacent to the American Tobacco Trail, and is located at the southeastern corner of the trail's intersection with Scott King Road. It will provide direct access to the ATT. In addition to parking for other vehicles, the parking area would provide space for drive-in/pull-through trailer parking for approximately 4-5 horse trailers, with plans to install as many pull-through spaces as feasible on the available land.

### **Issues/Analysis**

This grant will support the addition of a new amenity to the Durham portion of the ATT. In addition to providing parking for horse riders the project will also have parking for other vehicles and reduce the number of vehicles parked along the side of the road.

### **Alternatives**

The City Council could choose not to accept this donation and complete the project without NC Horse Council support.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no known negative financial impact to the City of Durham in accepting this donation.